



(U) Lessons Taught (and Learned)

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(U) Seven years ago, I heard through the grapevine that the Fort Meade schools were looking for volunteers to assist area students with their educational needs. During that same timeframe, I had considered separating from the Air Force to become a school teacher/golf coach, but decided otherwise. So when I heard about tutoring for our local schools, I thought, "Here is my opportunity to get the best of both worlds!"

(U) So I contacted the Partners in Education (PIE) program manager, scheduled/viewed the mandated video and signed the volunteer agreement form. I was ready to tutor on the subjects that I felt stronger in. Now granted, being a college student myself, you would think that I could help anyone regardless of the subject matter... **Wrong!** Following are three lessons that I've learned through my years of volunteering with the PIE program.

Lesson #1 - The tutor must understand the material well enough to explain it in as many different ways as necessary. The last thing you want to do to the students is confuse them more than they already are. The primary reason they are receiving instruction from you is to clear any confusion caused by their teacher.

Lesson #2 - A commitment throughout the school year is fundamental to the success of the PIE program. Once you start tutoring students, they tend to get attached and expect you to continue to help them throughout the school year. So unless you are willing to commit long term, it may not be beneficial for you or the student.

Lesson #3 - Be prepared to take pride in your accomplishment. The feeling you get when your students understand the material and are able to score higher on their tests or even avoid summer school is above all others. Dedicate yourself to helping any of the students requiring assistance and enrich the minds and spirits of these young people - it will continue to bear fruit for years to come.

In summary, contact a [PIE Coordinator](#) and make a difference in a child's life.

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